

Issue Date: *August 2026*

Review Date: *July 2027*

Lead Officer: Roxy Durran (Quality and Compliance Manager)



Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

1. Purpose of this Policy

TOAST is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where all learners are protected from harm.

We recognise that children and young people can abuse other children and that these behaviours can occur both within and outside of educational settings, including online. Child-on-child abuse will never be dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up", or "just a disagreement".

This policy outlines TOAST's commitment to preventing, identifying, responding to and managing child-on-child abuse, ensuring that all concerns are taken seriously and addressed promptly, fairly and in accordance with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

The welfare and safety of all learners will remain the primary consideration throughout any safeguarding response.

2. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance and Engagement Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Learner Voice and Co Design Policy
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

3. Associated Procedures

The following procedures support this policy:

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- Safeguarding Reporting Procedure
- Recording Concerns Procedure
- Child Protection Procedure
- Behaviour Incident Procedure
- Online Safety Procedure
- Risk Assessment Procedure
- Positive Behaviour Support Procedure
- Missing Learner Procedure

4. Principles

TOAST believes:

- Every learner has the right to feel safe.
- Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding concern.
- Every concern must be taken seriously.
- Victims should always be supported.
- Alleged perpetrators should receive appropriate support and intervention.
- All learners should be treated fairly and respectfully.
- Responses should be proportionate and person centred.
- Early intervention reduces future risk.
- Staff should maintain professional curiosity.
- Learners should be encouraged to report concerns.

5. What is Child-on-Child Abuse?

Child-on-child abuse is any behaviour by one child or young person that causes physical, emotional, psychological or sexual harm to another child or young person.

The abuse may occur:

- Within the educational setting.
- During community activities.
- During transport.
- During work experience.
- Online.
- Through social media.
- Outside of TOAST.

Abuse can occur between learners of any age, gender or ability.

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6. Forms of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Physical abuse.
- Bullying.
- Emotional abuse.
- Verbal abuse.
- Intimidation.
- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Upskirting.
- Sexting or sharing nude or semi-nude images.
- Online abuse.
- Cyber bullying.
- Coercive behaviour.
- Grooming by another child.
- Initiation or hazing behaviours.
- Hate incidents.
- Discriminatory abuse.

This list is not exhaustive.

7. Recognising Child-on-Child Abuse

Possible indicators include:

- Unexplained injuries.
- Anxiety.
- Withdrawal.
- Reduced attendance.
- Avoiding particular learners.
- Sudden changes in behaviour.
- Self harming behaviours.
- Low mood.
- Changes in friendship groups.
- Increased aggression.
- Distress when using mobile devices.
- Fear of attending college.

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Staff should also recognise that some learners may minimise or normalise abusive behaviour due to previous experiences or communication difficulties.

8. Preventing Child-on-Child Abuse

TOAST aims to prevent child-on-child abuse by:

- Promoting positive relationships.
- Encouraging respectful communication.
- Teaching healthy relationships.
- Promoting equality and inclusion.
- Delivering online safety education.
- Encouraging learners to report concerns.
- Providing positive role models.
- Supporting emotional wellbeing.
- Creating safe learning environments.
- Providing appropriate supervision.

Preventative work forms part of everyday teaching, learning and learner support.

9. Responding to Concerns

Any allegation or concern regarding child-on-child abuse must be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Staff must:

- Ensure the immediate safety of all learners.
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the learner.
- Avoid asking leading questions.
- Record factual information.
- Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Record the concern on the Zoho Young People Hub.

Staff must never investigate concerns themselves.

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10. Supporting Learners

TOAST recognises that both the learner experiencing abuse and the learner displaying harmful behaviour may require support.

Support may include:

- Emotional wellbeing support.
- Positive Behaviour Support.
- Risk assessments.
- Increased supervision.
- Restorative approaches where appropriate.
- External agency involvement.
- Individual learning support.
- Family engagement.
- Safety planning.

The needs of each learner will be considered individually.

11. Online Child-on-Child Abuse

Online abuse may include:

- Cyber bullying.
- Threatening messages.
- Image sharing.
- Coercion.
- Online grooming.
- Sharing personal information.
- Social media harassment.

Staff will respond to online abuse in the same way as face-to-face abuse.

Where appropriate, parents, carers, police or external agencies may be involved.

12. Recording and Reporting

All concerns will be:

- Reported immediately.
- Recorded on the Zoho Young People Hub.

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- Accurate.
- Objective.
- Timely.
- Confidential.

Records should include:

- Date and time.
- Individuals involved.
- Observations.
- Learner's own words where possible.
- Actions taken.
- Outcomes.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team will:

- Promote a safe culture.
- Monitor safeguarding practice.
- Review incidents.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- Receive concerns.
- Complete safeguarding assessments.
- Liaise with external agencies.
- Maintain safeguarding records.
- Monitor ongoing risk.
- Coordinate support.

Tutors

Tutors will:

- Promote respectful behaviour.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Support learners.

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- Record concerns accurately.

Learning Support Practitioners

Learning Support Practitioners will:

- Observe learner interactions.
- Promote positive relationships.
- Report concerns.
- Support agreed interventions.

Learners

Learners are encouraged to:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Report concerns.
- Seek help when worried.
- Support others appropriately.
- Contribute to a positive learning environment.

14. Equality and Inclusion

TOAST recognises that some learners may be at increased risk of child-on-child abuse due to disability, communication needs, protected characteristics or previous experiences.

All learners will receive equitable support, with reasonable adjustments made to communication, reporting and intervention processes where required.

15. Confidentiality

Information relating to child-on-child abuse will be managed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding legislation.

Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to know.

Where a safeguarding concern exists, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

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16. Quality Assurance

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Safeguarding audits.
- Incident reviews.
- Zoho Young People Hub record audits.
- Learner feedback.
- Staff supervision.
- Safeguarding training records.
- Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) where appropriate.
- Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA).
- Annual policy review.

Learning from incidents will be used to strengthen safeguarding practice and reduce future risk.

17. Monitoring and Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where required following:

- Changes in legislation or statutory guidance.
- Updates to safeguarding guidance.
- Learning from safeguarding incidents.
- Ofsted inspection findings.
- Organisational changes.
- Identified areas for improvement.

Any amendments will be approved by the Leadership Team and communicated to all relevant staff.